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Shuster Welcomes USDA Employee David Greaser Home from Iraq

Huntingdon/Blair County Farm Service Officer Spent a Year Helping Rebuild Iraq's Agriculture Sector

Washington, D.C. – **Congressman Bill Shuster** is pleased to welcome David Greaser home from his one year voluntary Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) tour in Iraq where he helped the Iraqi government rebuild the country's agriculture sector. David will return to his job as the USDA's Farm Service Agency County Executive Director for Huntingdon and Blair Counties.

"Fostering a strong agricultural sector in Iraq is essential to that nation's economic and political vitality," said Congressman Shuster. "For the past year, David has worked to help the Iraqi people rebuild their nation and improve their own standard of living. I congratulate him on his service and I join my constituents throughout the 9th district in welcoming him home from a job well done."

"The efforts of people like David are crucial for creating stable, democratic, and economically viable societies in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq," said FAS Administrator Michael Michener. "Whether their expertise is in forestry, soil and water conservation, food safety, agricultural extension and policy, or veterinary services, volunteers like Dave are needed to contribute their specialized skills to help farmers, citizens, and national and provincial government leaders of these two countries."

Background on David Greaser:

Greaser served as a USDA PRT agricultural advisor on the Baghdad embedded PRT-Northeast, located 20 miles from Baghdad along the Tigris River. Among his many agricultural projects, Greaser worked with two local farm organizations to provide training to more than 200 women, many of whom are widows, in small poultry flock management or beekeeping. After completing each course each trainee either received 10 hens, a rooster, and 110 pounds of fodder or a starter hive and swarm of bees. Demand for these courses continues and will be repeated throughout the area with expansion into livestock training. Born and raised in central Pennsylvania, Greaser currently lives in Williamsburg. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from Penn State University in State College.

This spring, 60-70 Iraqi extension specialists received advanced extension training at five U.S. land-grant universities under the Iraq Agricultural Extension Revitalization Project (IAER). Currently, Greaser is working on a project to bring eight Iraqis to Penn State University this fall.

Background on the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service Mission to Iraq:

Since 2003, USDA has deployed staff to Iraq for long- and short-term assignments. This year, USDA will fill 33 Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) agricultural advisor positions in Iraq. PRT advisors work on a variety of projects depending on the needs of the province. All projects are aimed at helping Iraq reconstruct the physical and institutional infrastructure of its agricultural sector.

In Iraq, PRTs are led by the U.S. Department of State and are typically composed of more than 50 military and civilian personnel, the majority being from the military. The PRT agricultural advisor is just one of the civilians on the PRT; other personnel come from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development and Department of Justice.

For more information about volunteering to serve on a PRT, please go to <http://jobsearch.usajobs.gov/agency.aspx> and select Foreign Agricultural Service. General information about USDA's programs and activities in Iraq can be found at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/country/iraq/development/iraq.asp>

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